

# Minutes

## May 24, 2007

The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board of the Office of State Ethics held its regular meeting on Thursday, May 24, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. in Conference Room 2-A, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 18-20 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson at 1:00 p.m.

The following members of the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board were in attendance:

- Patricia T. Hendel, Chairperson
- Robert Worgaftik, Vice Chairperson
- Michael Rion, Board Member
- Dennis Riley, Board Member
- Jaclyn Bernstein, Board Member
- Sister Sally J. Tolles, Board Member
- Scott A. Storms, Board Member (arrived at 1:15, participated in all votes)

The following staff members of the Office of State Ethics were in attendance for portions of the meeting:

- Benjamin Bycel, Executive Director
- Meredith Trimble, Education Director
- Christine V. Vieira, Office Assistant/Clerk
- TJ Jones, Ethics Enforcement Officer
- Patrick Lamb, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer
- Mark Wasielewski, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer
- Barbara Housen, General Counsel
- Brian O'Dowd, Assistant General Counsel
- Peter Lewandowski, Assistant General Counsel
- Cynthia Isales, Assistant General Counsel

\*\*\*The Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board requests that all motions and votes taken be bolded and underlined.

\*\*\*Minutes are briefly summarized. Tapes are available to the public for the entirety of Board meetings.

The following topics were discussed during the meeting (numbers do not correspond with agenda):

1. Benjamin Bycel, Executive Director, presented his Director's report for the Board. The following matters contained in the report were presented:
  - a. Sandi Johnson, Office Assistant, will be leaving the OSE in June. While trying to fill vacancies in the OSE, it was discovered that the OSE has to deal with computer program access as standard protocol before hiring initiatives resume.
  - b. The OSE online filing systems-SFI and Lobbyist-are working well. Out of 2,700+ filers, approximately 22% filed their SFI online. With the continued communication from the OSE, that number will increase in 2008. Reports will be ready within the next few weeks in relation to the Lobbyist Filing System.
  - c. Legislative efforts have continued with Peter, Crissy, Barbara, and Bycel attending various meetings of the GAE committee. The OSE is following various bills, the major bills being:
    - **Bill No. 145** – This bill establishes a task force to write recommendations concerning OSE's jurisdiction over municipal ethics. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Committee on Legislative Management filed a joint favorable report with the Legislative Commissioner's Office. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> the bill was placed on the Senate Calendar. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate proposed an amendment referring to disclosure on SFI's pertaining to the name and address of each employer and the description of the source of income.
    - **Bill No. 1315** – This is the UConn bill which exempts all state college systems (universities, state colleges, community colleges) from some of the requirements of the current ethics codes. The last action taken on May 2<sup>nd</sup> was a favorable report from the Committee on Banks and placement on the Senate calendar for discussion. (Please see Barbara Housen's letter to the University representatives and their response in your notebooks).
    - **Bill No. 7000** – This is the "Municipal Ethics" bill. This bill, as originally written, would have given the OSE the responsibility of oversight and regulation of ethics and lobbying for all municipalities. The Planning & Development Committee proposed a joint favorable substitution which was placed on the House calendar for discussion on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The House referred the substitution to the Committee on Appropriations on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The OSE suggested, and supports, a recommendation to the GAE Committee Co-Chairs that instead of attempting to move forward with the bill which includes the entire state, they should consider amending the bill to include only a pilot program with a limited number of cities and towns of various sizes for a minimum of two years.
    - **Bill No. 7002** – This is the comprehensive bill. It entails the technical & substantive changes to the General Statutes that were suggested by the OSE. The last action taken was a public hearing in the GAE committee on February 5<sup>th</sup>.
    - **Bill No. 7372** - This bill originally gave the three (3) watchdog agencies – OSE, SEEC, and FOIC relative autonomy from DAS over the selection of employees, their title, and pay rate. The last action was a joint favorable substitute bill from the Committee on Labor & Public Employees filed on May 15<sup>th</sup> with the Legislative Commissioner's Office. However, please see the explanation below concerning OSE's elimination from the bill:

- (A further explanation from Peter Lewandowski, Assistant General Counsel): The three agencies – OSE, SEEC and Freedom of Information Commission (FOIC) – have worked together to address concerns raised by union representatives and subsequently submitted a unified language to be applied to each agency’s enabling statutes. Although there were virtually no substantial language variations among the three agencies’ proposed amendments, the bill recently came out of the labor committee where, surprisingly, the language applicable to OSE was omitted. We are working with members of the legislature to correct this apparent error.
- d. Educational training continues with a full schedule reaching over 2000 state employees. The “designer set” of plain-language guides is complete. Online training is going well with 940 users participating in the first four (4) weeks of its existence. Going forward, the OSE is drafting a new brochure to explain the complaint process, working to create a new webpage where advisory opinions will be organized, and will turn attention to the odd-year conference for legislators and lobbyists. We will also attempt to embark upon a state-wide public relations effort to add the OSE to the paycheck flyer process.

It shall be noted that there was no one from the public in attendance at this meeting.

2. TJ Jones, Ethics Enforcement Officer, presented 3 audits for the Board’s approval. The Board had previously reviewed the audits and voted on all in one vote. **Chairperson Patricia Hendel entertained a motion for approval of the audits: Health Management Online, Inc., Cox & Osowiecki, LLC., and Connecticut Underwriters, Inc. The motion was moved by Board member Dennis Riley and seconded by Board member Michael Rion. The vote was unanimously in favor with all seven (7) Board members approving the audits.**
3. **Vice-Chairperson Worgaftik entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter related to the Executive Director, the Ethics Enforcement Officer, and Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer, Patrick Lamb. The motion was moved by Board member Tolles and seconded by Chairperson Hendel.** Executive Director Bycel had no objection to the discussion of a personnel matter pertaining to him occurring in Executive Session. TJ Jones, Ethics Enforcement Officer, objected to the discussion of a personnel matter pertaining to him in Executive Session and stated that he preferred that the discussion take place at the public meeting. Patrick Lamb, Assistant Ethics Enforcement Officer, objected to the discussion of a personnel matter pertaining to him in Executive Session and stated that he preferred that the discussion take place at the public meeting. Chairperson Hendel formally requested that Barbara Housen, General Counsel be present during the Executive Session.
4. Minutes for the April 26, 2007 meeting were presented to the Board. **Chairperson Hendel entertained a motion for approval of the minutes. The motion was moved by Board member Sister Sally Tolles and seconded by Board member Rion. The vote was unanimously in favor with all seven (7) Board members approving the minutes with an amendment in the last vote switching the Board member that called the move and second.**

The Board went into Executive Session at 2:00 p.m.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 3:10 p.m.

**Chairperson Hendel entertained a motion to adjourn the Board meeting. Board member Scott Storms moved the motion and Board member Rion seconded the motion. All Board members were in favor.**

The Board meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine V. Vieira, Office Assistant, OSE  
Clerk, Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_